United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General welcomes unilateral cease-fire declared by Iraq as of this morning.

+ Unconditional acceptance of proposed principles by all sides in Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed by Secretary-General; peace talks to resume in Geneva on Saturday, 23 January.

+ In two separate letters to United Nations, Bosnia and Herzegovina protests "chronic interference" by Serbian and Montenegrin military forces with UNHCR humanitarian deliveries to Bosnian towns in need of food; and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) tells of Moslem aggression against its territory.

+ Security problems posed by armed bandits along the Kenyan-Somali border is topic of discussions beginning today between Kenyan Government officials and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

+ Audrey Hepburn, Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF since 1989, dies in Switzerland.

+ Secretary-General accepts with regret resignation by Under-Secretary-General for Public Affairs Joseph Verner Reed.

+ Hiroshi Nakajima nominated for second five-year term as Director General for World Health Organization.

+ Pierre J. Méhu appointed Director of United Nations Information Centre in Brussels.

+ Regional meeting for World Conference on Human Rights, scheduled for June in Vie na, begins in San Jose.

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For information media—not an official record

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today welcomed the statement by the Revolution Command of Iraq yesterday that it would cease fire as of 8:00 a.m. today (Baghdad time).

In a statement issued at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General further said he strongly hoped that the cease-fire, together with full compliance with all Security Council resolutions by Iraq, would decrease tension in the area.

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The constitutional principles proposed by Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on former Yugoslavia, have now been unconditionally accepted by all sides and the peace talks will resume in Geneva on Saturday, 23 January, according to the Secretary-General's Spokesman today.

In a statement issued today, the Secretary-General said he welcomed the new developments, which would enable the peace process to continue with the immediate purpose of reaching an agreement on the provincial map proposed by the Co-Chairmen. He appealed to all sides to conclude the agreement without delay and to observe the unconditional cessation of hostilities to which the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) had already agreed, thereby laying the basis for lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The provincial map illustrating the ten-province structure was proposed by the Co-Chairmen as part of a comprehensive political settlement for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the meantime, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen were in Zagreb today to help mediate the dispute that has broken out between the Muslim-led Bosnian Government and the Croats. They plan to return to Geneva tomorrow, the Spokesman said.

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Bosnia and Herzegovina has informed the United Nations that Serbian and Montenegrin military forces are denying access of food deliveries to Gorazde and Srebrenica, two Bosnian towns that are in desperate need.

In a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 18 January, the Bosnian Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Muhamed Sacirbey, said Serb and Montenegrin forces were "chronically" interfering with convoys of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Such interference with the delivery of humanitarian assistance, he said, imminently threatened the lives of hundreds of thousands of people.

The letter noted that exposure, disease and hunger were now the principal tools of ethnic cleansing, "as effective or perhaps more effective than even bombs or bullets".

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In related news, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) has informed the United Nations of "the agression of Moslem forces on 16 January" against its territory in the area of the Serbian municipality of Bratunac.

According to a letter of 18 January from Dobrica Cosic, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, addressed to the Secretary-General, Moslem forces surrounded a number of Serbian villages and "massacred the civilian population" and opened fire on the dam of the Perucac Hydro Power Station, "intending to cause an ecological catastrophe".

President Cosic said the "biased and one-sided behavior of certain international factors" had encouraged the Moslem side "to aggressive and provocative conduct". In spite of the constant efforts to jeopardize the peace process, he said, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia would intensify its efforts for putting an end to the suffering of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and arriving at a just political solution and ensuring lasting peace.
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The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Kenyan Government officials today began discussions aimed at finding a solution to the mounting security problems posed by armed bandits along the Kenyan-Somali border, according to a UNHCR press release issued today.

The Agency reported that last week, at least 18 people, including several Kenyan guards, were killed in cross-border raids when armed bandits attacked camps -- housing Somali, Ethiopian and Sudanese refugees -- in search of food and vehicles. The UNHCR has asked Governments involved in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia to consider speeding up the deployment of forces to three areas along the Somalia-Kenya frontier to halt the increasing forays of Somali bandits across the border.

While committed to finding a durable solution for the 416,000 refugees who have found sanctuary in Kenya, the release said, UNHCR's mandate will not allow it to be a party to the forced rapatriation of refugees to areas where their lives could be at risk. Furthermore, it said, insecurity around the border refugee camps, along with heavy rains that have turned roads into impassable road tracks, have seriously disrupted food deliveries to the refugees.

Canadian cargo jets today began an emergency food airlift into the region, the release added.

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The American Actress and Goodwill Ambassador to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Audrey Hepburn, died today in Switzerland. She was 63 years old.

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According to a press release issued by UNICEF, Mr. Hepburn became an official spokesperson for the Agency in 1988. The following year she was named Goodwill Ambassador and "immediately set off to visit drought-stricken Ethiopia".

In September 1992, Ms. Hepburn visited first war-ravaged and drought-stricken Somalia and then refugee camps in northern Kenya. This mission was followed by extensive media activities in Nairobi, London, Geneva, Paris and the United States.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros said today in an announcement that he had accepted, with regret, the resignation by Under-Secretary-General Joseph Verner Reed.

An "invaluable friend of the United Nations", Mr. Reed had made significant contributions to help further the objectives of the Organization in the past, and would continue to do so in the future, the Secretary-General said.

Mr. Reed has twice served the United Nations as Under-Secretary-General. From 1987 to 1989, he was Under-Secretary-General for General Asembly and Political Affairs and from 1992 to present, he was Under-Secretary-General and Special Representative for Public Affairs.

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Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima has been nominated for a second five-year term as Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) by its Executive Board, which met in Geneva today. His nomination will be submitted for the approval of the forty-sixth World Health Assembly meeting in Geneva next May. Dr. Nakajima's present term of office ends in July 1993.

Dr. Nakajima joined the WHO in 1974 in the position of Scientist, Drug Evaluation and Monitoring. He became chief of the Drug Policies and Management Unit in 1975. In 1978, the WHO Regional Committee for the Western Pacific nominated Dr. Nakajima as Regional Director. In May 1988, while still in office as Regional Director, he was appointed Director-General of the WHO by the forty-first World Health Assembly.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appointed Pierre J. Méhu, a national of Haiti, as Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Brussels. He will take up his post on 1 February, succeeding Salah Cherif who is retiring from the Organization. The UNIC Brussels provides information services to Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the European Community.

Mr. Méhu had served, since 1990, as Director of the United Nations Information Service at Geneva. He joined the Department of Public Information

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(DPI) in April 1974 as a Press Officer in the French Press Section, and became Chief of the Section in 1985.

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Delegations from 33 Latin American and Caribbean nations began a week-long meeting in San Jose yesterday to negotiate a regional position for the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights to be held in Vienna from 14 to 25 June.

The Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean has been convened to review the work of the United Nations in the promotion and protection of all human rights as defined in various legal instruments beginning with the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948.

Delegations are expected to formulate proposals for promoting human rights and improve coordination of the United Nations mechanisms and regional systems. That set of recommendations -- to be called the "Declaration of San Jose" -- will be submitted to the World Conference in Vienna.

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